

IRS News Release

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\$73 Million in Refund Checks Go Undelivered

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service is looking for 87,485 taxpayers whose income tax refund checks could not be delivered. Checks totaling more than \$73 million can be reissued as soon as taxpayers correct or update their addresses with the IRS.

"If we owe you money, we'd like to get it to you," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. "All you have to do is tell us where you are. Our Web site makes it easy for taxpayers to track their undelivered refund checks."

"Where's My Refund?" on IRS.gov provides information about refunds and is available from the IRS home page. To use it, taxpayers enter information that includes their Social Security number, filing status (such as single or married filing jointly) and the refund amount shown on their 2003 tax return. When the information is submitted online, taxpayers see Web pages that show the status of their refund and, in some cases, instructions to resolve potential account issues.

"Where's My Refund?" was developed through the IRS Business Systems Modernization program and delivered in the summer of 2002. Taxpayers used the online tool nearly 24 million times to track their refunds in 2004.

The number of undeliverable checks decreased this year by 5,325, but the average refund, \$836, increased compared with last year's average of \$722.

Taxpayers can avoid undelivered refund checks by having their refunds directly deposited into a personal checking or savings account. Direct deposit also guards against theft or lost refund checks. The option is available for both paper and electronically filed returns. More than 49 million taxpayers chose to direct deposit almost \$120 billion in refunds this year. The number of direct deposit refunds was up 10.8 percent from last year.

Refund checks go astray for reasons that can vary with each taxpayer. Often, it's because a life change causes an address change. If taxpayers move or change their address and fail to notify the IRS or the U.S. Postal Service, a check sent to their last known address is returned to the IRS.

Taxpayers who have moved since filing their last tax return can ensure the IRS has their correct address by filing Form 8822, Change of Address, with the IRS. Download the form or request it by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

Those without access to the Internet, who think they may be missing a refund, should first check their records or contact their tax preparer before calling the IRS toll-free assistance line at 1-800-829-1040 to update their address.

Related Links:

- “Where’s My Refund?” — <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96596,00.html>
- Local media contacts — <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=97242,00.html>
- Form 8822, Change of Address — <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8822.pdf>

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Editor’s Note: Local media looking for details on undelivered refunds should contact their local IRS media relations office. Names and numbers of local “Media Contacts” are available on the Newsroom page on IRS.gov. National media may call 202-622-4000.